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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF TWELVE OF THE AMERICAN
PHILOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION ON THE STUDY OF LATIN¹

THE programmes of secondary education put out by the Committee of Ten in their report published in 1893, proposed the reduction of Greek preparatory studies from three years to two, and the reduction of Latin preparatory studies from five periods a year for four years to five periods a year for the first two years and four periods for the remaining two years.

The harm which would have been worked by the acceptance of the proposition with regard to Greek was so great and unmistakable that immediate and unhesitating protest was demanded. Accordingly the American Philological Association, at a large meeting held in Philadelphia, December 28, 1894, unanimously adopted a motion (now generally made known throughout the country) that, in any programme designed to prepare students for the classical course, not less than three years of instruction in Greek should be required.

The harm which would have been worked by the acceptance of the proposition of the Committee of Ten with regard to Latin was appreciable, and the point of view from which the reduction in that subject was made was a dangerous one. Nevertheless, since the proposed reduction in Greek was the more serious of the two, the Philological Association confined its immediate expression of opinion to that subject, charging its Committee of Twelve, however, with the further duty of considering the questions involved in the propositions with regard to Latin. The committee accordingly gave the question careful thought, and conferred also with a large number of other members of the association engaged in the teaching of languages, ancient or modern, in schools or colleges. It found a striking harmony of opinion, which was further evinced at the meeting of the American Philological Association held in Cleveland on July 13, 1895, by the unanimous passage of the following resolution:

"The American Philological Association is of the opinion that the best interests of education demand the retention of the full amount of five weekly periods for four years now generally given, throughout the country, by schools that have a four-year course. And it would be glad to see an increase of the number of years devoted to the subject, either through an extension of the high-school course to five or six years, or through the carrying of some of the high-school subjects into the grammar-school curriculum."

The Association recognizes the fact that the prevailing crowding and lack

¹ This report was originally prepared by a special sub-committee consisting of the four Latin professors of the Committee of Twelve.

of uniformity in our secondary education in America are serious evils. Accordingly it is in sympathy with the desire of the Committee of Ten to relieve the present congestion of studies and at the same time reach a national programme or series of programmes which might everywhere be adopted; but the association differs radically from that committee with regard to the method to be employed. It is of course clear that, under the present circumstances of increasing demands for time on the part of many of the so-called newer subjects, the results desired cannot be obtained unless there is either a general reduction of the time given to each subject or a complete omission of some of the subjects or a relegation of some of them, in whole or in part, to the grammar-school grade. In the judgment of the Philological Association the first method, which was the one proposed by the Committee of Ten, is not the true one. It is not best to relieve an over-crowded programme by reducing studies that are of central importance. It is better in any case to make sure that the few essential things in any programme of study, whether classical or scientific or of any other kind, are given their full weight and effectiveness, than to teach many things incompletely through an insufficient allotment of time.

It is to be clearly understood that the Association is not now concerned with the question whether every one should be required to study Latin, but is simply laying down the proposition that those who desire to study it should find a sufficient amount of time devoted to it to enable them to gain the best results. In point of fact there seems to have been a general agreement that five periods a year for four years is none too large an amount to assign to the subject. No demand for a reduction from this amount has come from the schools themselves. On the contrary, it seems to be generally recognized that a larger amount of time, rather than a smaller, ought to be given to the subject of Latin. In a number of schools in different parts of the country courses of five or six years have already been developed; and the feeling which led to this movement found formal expression, at the meeting of a large and widely representative Classical Conference held at Ann Arbor in March 1895, in the passage, without a dissenting vote, of a resolution in favor of a six-year course.

This belief in a longer course, rather than a shorter one, appears most natural to one who studies the problems of education not simply from the point of view of American experiments, but with the knowledge also of the experience of other countries. Our better schools usually provide four years for the study of Latin, with five exercises a week. If to this amount be added the two years of Latin regarded as normal by colleges which prescribe a part of their work, American education has at best a six-year Latin course to present as against the nine-year or ten-year course found in Germany and England. Moreover, the number of weekly exercises given to the subject is smaller in this country than in Europe. A reduction to a still lower standard, such as is proposed by the Committee of Ten, would be uncalled for and

unfortunate. We protest against it, because such a reduction would tend to cripple the study of Latin and other studies which are appreciably affected by its welfare, and because such a reduction would postpone the hopes we entertain that Latin studies will be developed in this country until the opportunities afforded equal the best open to students in the old world. We therefore appeal to our universities, our colleges, and our schools, and to all friends of sound education, in whatever occupation, to see to it that our preparatory Latin, in place of being weakened, is strengthened and developed as soon as practicable into something more substantial than we now possess. To this end we especially ask the coöperation, not only of all classical teachers, but of those who are interested in our own and other modern languages; and in general we ask the support of all men who believe in a well-rounded, liberal education, in which literary studies constitute an indispensable part.

WILLIAM W. GOODWIN, *Professor of Greek, Harvard University*
Chairman

CECIL F. P. BANCROFT, *Principal of Phillips Andover Academy*

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WILLIAM G. HALE, *Professor of Latin, University of Chicago*

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